

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2215

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 HAVANA 1656

EO 11652: GDS
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SUBJ: CASTRO'S INTERVIEW ON US TELEVISION

1. FULL TEXT OF CASTRO'S JUNE 16 INTERVIEW WITH BARBAR WALTERS
(ABC), RICHARD VALERIANI (NBC) AND ED RABEL (CBS) IS CARRIED IN
GRANAMA, JUNE 19. (BARBARA WALTERS' SOLO PORTION IS OMITTED.)
FOLLOWING ELEMENTS OF INTERVIEW STRIKE US AS SIGNIFICANT:

--CASTRO ALLOWS THAT HE WOULD FAVOR RELEASE OF ALL FOUR AMERICAN
POLITICAL PRISONERS, BUT ONLY IN EXCHANGE FOR ALL FOUR PUERTO
RICANS CURRENTLY IN US JAILS (SERVING SENTENCES FOR 1950'S SHOOT-
INGS IN US CONGRESS AND AT PRESIDENT -- SEE SEPTTEL.)

--CASTRO NOTES "CERTAIN CHANGE"" IN JUNE 15 PRESS CONFERENCE STATE-
MENT OF PRESIDENT CARTER, WITH EMPHASIS SHIFTED AWAY FROM "PUTTING
DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY ON CUBA" FOR SHABA EVENTS. CASTRO CONTINUES
TO JUXTAPOSE POSITIONS OF SECRETARY VANCE AND AMBASSADOR YOUNG
TO THOSE OF DR. BRZEZINSKI, AND PRAISES PRESIDENT CARTER AS A
"PERSONALLY HONEST MAN, WHO POSSESSES AN ETHIC BASED ON HIS
RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS."

--CASTRO, NONETHELESS, DECLINES TO MAKE ANY COMMITMENTS,
FOLLOWING UP ON PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENTS, TO RESTRAIN
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KATANGESE IN FUTURE. HE SAYS THAT CUBANS WILL ONLY DO WHAT
ANGOLANS TELL THEM TO DO. CASTRO, HOWEVER, IMPLICITLY POSES
TRADEOFF BY DECLARING THAT HE COULD ALSO ASK PRESIDENT CARTER
TO USE HIS GOOD OFFICES WITH MOBUTU TO END TRAINING, EQUIPPING,
ORGANIZING, AND AUTHORIZING OF FLEC, FNLA AND UNITA
"AGGRESSIONS" FROM ZAIRE. IN THIS CONTEXT, CASTRO "REVEALS"
INFORMATION FROM RELIABLE SOURCE SAYING THAT CIA HAS RECENTLY

MADE CONTACT WITH UNITA AND PROMISED SUPPORT OF US GOVERNMENT TO THAT GROUP. CASTRO CALLS ON USG TO CONFIRM OR DENY THIS CONTACT AND PROMISE.

--CASTRO, PURSUANT TO PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT, ALSO DECLINES TO CONDEMN KATANGESE INCURSION SINCE THIS WOULD SERVE AS JUSTIFICATION OF WESTERN INTERVENTION AND AS INDICATION OF MOBUTU. HE CLAIMS FALSELY THAT US DID NOT CONDEMN CASSINGA ATTACK. ON QUESTION OF WHY CUBANS DID NOT TELL ANYONE BESIDES NETO ABOUT IMPENDING KATANGESE INCURSION, CASTRO ARGUES THAT HE IS NOT HIS BROTHER'S KEEPER AND THAT PROBLEMS OF ANGOLA NEED ONLY BE DISCUSSED WITH ANGOLANS. KEY TO HIS REPLY, HOWEVER, IS HIS STATEMENT THAT KATANGESE PROBLEM IN HIS VIEW WAS POLITICAL, NOT MORAL-LEGAL, PROBLEM -- THAT IS, KATANGESE HAD LEGITIMATE RIGHT TO ATTACK MOBUTU, BUT ATTACK COMPLICATED EFFORT TO STABILIZE ANGOLAN SITUATION AND TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON OVERTHROW OF RHODESIAN, NAMIBIAN, AND SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE MINORITY REGIMES.

--CASTRO DECLARES THAT CUBAN POLICY IN AFRICA IS SUPPORT OF ESTABLISHED GOVERNMENTS, WITH EXCEPTION OF CUBAN SUPPORT OF NAMIBIA, MIZBABWE AND SOUTH AFRICAN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS. NO COMMITMENT IS MADE REGARDING LIMITS OF CUBAN SUPPORT FOR THESE MOVEMENTS.

--CUBAN LEADER, SPEAKING GENERALLY BUT PRESUMABLY WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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ETHIOPIA AND ERITREA IN MIND, SAYS THAT CUBA HAS NOT SUPPORTED AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS "IN RELATION TO THEIR INTERNAL PROBLEMS, BUT ARE COLLABORATING IN THEIR DEFENSE AGAINST EXTERNAL AGGREGATION". CASTRO ADDS, PERHAPS WITH REGARD TO NEGEDE GOBEZIE AFFAIR, THAT CUBA DOES NOT "INTERFERE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF ANY AFRICAN COUNTRY".

--ON SPECIFIC SHABA-RELATED QUESTIONS, CASTRO STATES THAT FOLLOWING CIA ASSERTIONS ARE "ABSOLUTE LIES":

-CUBA TRAINED KATANGESE FOR 1977 INCURSION AND HELPED THEM IN AFTERMATH;

-CUBA AND USSR ASKED ANGOLAN GOVERNMENT IN 1976 TO PERMIT ZAIRE INCURSIONS AND CUBANS AND EAST GERMANS TRAINED KATANGESE AT ANGOLA'S SURIMO AIR BASE;

-CUBAN INSTRUCTORS IN 1977 TRAINED KATANGESE AT BASES OF CAZAMBO, NOVA CHAVES, CHICAPO, SEREMO, AND KAMISFOMO;

-CUBAN HAD PROVIDED ASSURANCES OF SUPPORT TO KATANGESE LEADER M'BUMBA;

-CUBANS ORGANIZED LOGISTICS OF MOVEMENT AND ACCOMPANIED KATANGESE TO BORDER OF ZAMBIA.

--CASTRO ADDS GLOSS ON DESCRIPTION OF HOW ANGOLANS WERE

APPRISED OF "RUMORS" OF POSSIBLE KATANGESE INCURSION,
INDICATING THAT CUBAN CP SECRETARIAT MEMBER JORGE RISQUET WAS
DISPATCHED FROM CUBA, WHERE HE WAS VACATIONING TO ANGOLA
AT END OF FEBRUARY TO DISCUSS MATTER WITH NETO. (COMMENT:
RISQUET WAS BACK IN CUBA BY EARLY MARCH - SEE HAVANA 631.)
NETO TOOK MEASURES VIS-A-VIS KATANGESE, CASTRO SAYS, BUT HIS
ABSENCE FROM COUNTRY PREVENTED HIM FROM CHECKING ON EXECU-
TION. CASTRO, WITHOUT CLAIMING, AS HE HAS IN PRIVATE, THAT
NETO OPPOSED USE OF MILITARY FORCE AGAINST KATANGESE (SEE
HAVAN 1633), POINTS OUT THAT CUBANS COULD USE MILITARY
FORCE ONLY WITH NETO'S AUTHORIZATION AND WOULD DO SO NOW,
BUT ONLY IF NETO ASKS. RESPONSIBILITY IS THUS PLACED
SQUARELY ON SHOULDERS OF ANGOLANS.

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--TURING TO US AND CUBAN INTERESTS SECTIONS, CASTRO
STATES THAT HE WILL NOT CLOSE THEM. HE ADDS THAT US COULD
HAVE USED INTERESTS SECTIONS IF IT HAD ANY CONFUSION OR
DOUBT OVER ASSURANCES PASSED BY CASTRO TO USINT CHIEF LANE.

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FM USINT HAVANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2216

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 HAVANA 1656

2. COMMENT: CASTRO HAS APPRAISED PRESIDENT CARTER'S
JUNE 15 STATEMENT AS A CONCILIATORY GESTURE IN HIS DIRECTION.
IN RESPONSE, HE CHOSE TO OFFER UP A GESTURE OF FLEXIBILITY
ON A US-CUBAN BILATERAL ISSUE - THE POSSIBLE RELEASE OF
AMCIT POLITICAL PRISONERS IN EXCHANGE FOR THE FOUR PUERTO

RICAN PRISONERS IN THE US. THIS FOLLOWS UP ON HIS GESTURE, JUNE 12, IN GRANTING EXIT PERMITS TO US DUAL NATIONALS HERE AND THEIR FAMILIES. CASTRO'S MOVES ON ISSUES OF UNIQUE INTEREST TO US ARE IN ACCORD WITH HIS EFFORT TO "UNLINK" US-CUBAN BILATERAL RELATIONS FROM CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA. THUS, WHILE CASTRO WAS PERSONALLY COMPLIMENTARY TO PRESIDENT CARTER AND HAS BEEN FORTHCOMING IN BILATERAL GESTURES, HE REFUSED TO RESPOND TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S URGING THAT CUBANS MOVE TO PREVENT FUTURE KATANGESE INCURSIONS OR TO SUGGEST THAT CUBA MIGHT HAVE BEEN REMISS IN NOT INFORMING OTHER AFRICAN PARTIES OF POSSIBLE INCURSION. CASTRO STILL INTENDS TO EXERCISE FREE HAND IN AFRICA AND HIS MILITARY ASSISTANCE ROLE - WHICH HE STATES CLEARLY HE INTENDS TO PURSUE, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, AT LEAST IN RHODESIAN, NAMIBIAN, AND SOUTH AFRICAN SITUATIONS - WILL CONTINUE TO BE A MATTER OF CONCERN TO US. NONETHELESS, USG, WHILE NOTING SHORTCOMINGS OF CASTRO'S AFRICAN POLICY, SHOULD AT SAME TIME RECONIZE POSITIVE VALUE OF CASTRO'S STEPS IN OUR DIRECTION ON PENDING BILATERAL ISSUES.

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3. ON CASTRO'S CALL FOR US STATEMENT ON UNITA CONTACTS, WE BELIEVE THAT US SHOULD RESPOND THAT WE HAVE HAD CONTACT WITH ALL ANGOLAN MOVEMENTS, INCLUDING MPLA, THAT USG DOES NOT RECOGNIZE ANY ONE MOVEMENT, AND THAT NO SUPPORT CONTRARY TO US LEGISLATION HAS EVER BEEN PROMISED OR GIVEN. SUCH AN AFFIRMATION COULD WELL BE FOLLOWED BY DECLARATION OF SUPPORT FOR RECONCILIATION AMONG ANGOLAN FACTIONS WHICH COULD BE FACILITATED IF: A) CUBANS CEASED COMBAT ACTIVITIES AGAINST DISCREPANT ANGOLAN INTERNAL ELEMENTS AND B) NEIGHBORING STATES DECLARED THEIR INTENTION NOT TO DISRUPT PROCESS OF PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF ANGOLAN DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION. WHILE CUBANS WOULD LIKELY REJECT THIS APPROACH SINCE THEY ARE COMMITTED TO ASSURING MILITARY VICTORY OF MPLAN, BLAME FOR CONTINUED COMBAT IN ANGOLA WOULD BE FOCUSED ON HAVANA. HIGHLIGHTING AGAIN OF CUBA'S ROLE AGAINST INTERNAL INSURGENTS, WHICH CASTRO SOUGHT TO DOWNPLAY IN HIS INTERVIEW, WOULD BE USEFUL ALSO IN MAINTAINING THIRD COUNTRY PRESSURE AGAINST CUBAN MOVES IN ERITREA. END COMMENT. GLASSMAN

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